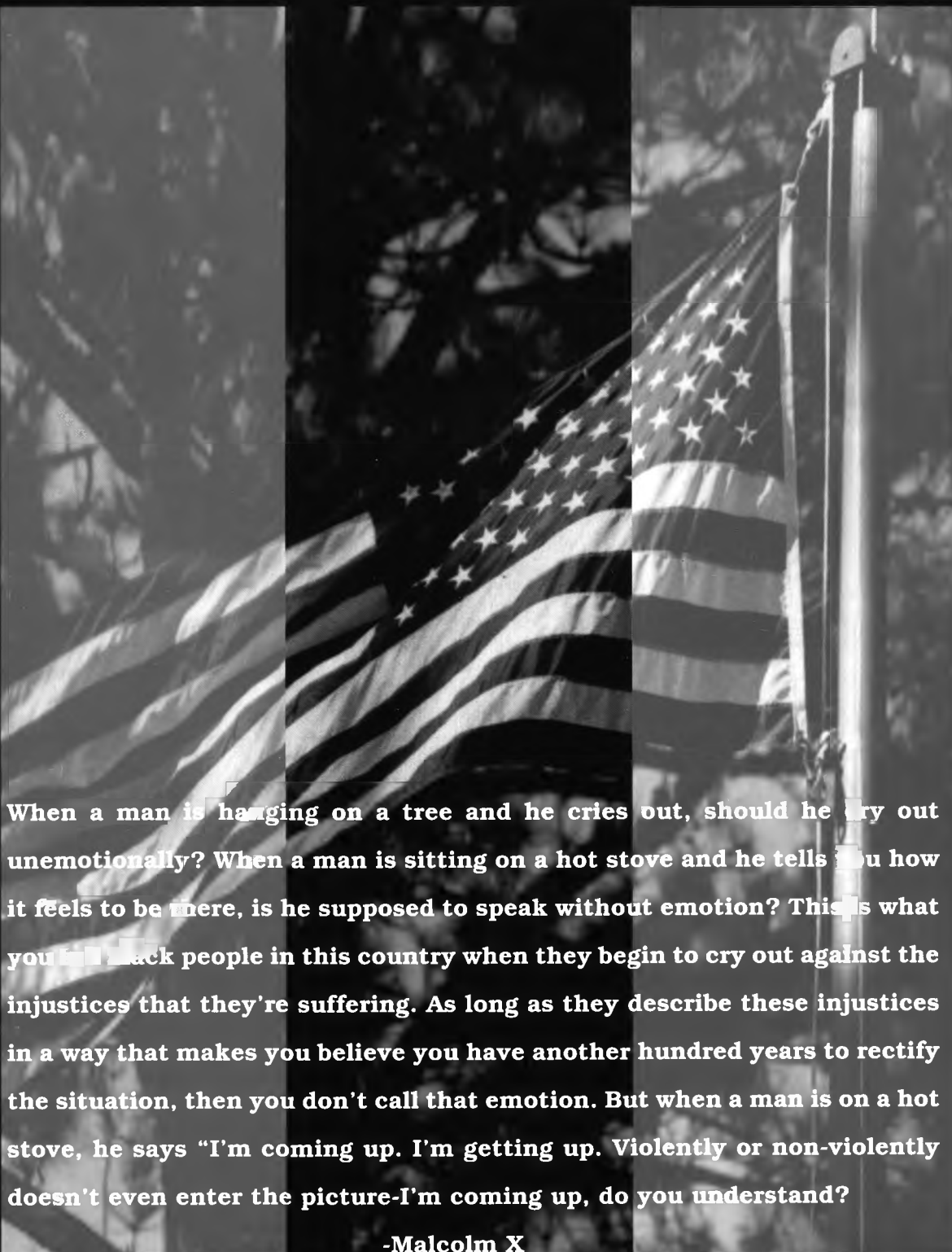


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When a man is hanging on a tree and he cries out, should he cry out unemotionally? When a man is sitting on a hot stove and he tells you how it feels to be there, is he supposed to speak without emotion? This is what you tell black people in this country when they begin to cry out against the injustices that they're suffering. As long as they describe these injustices in a way that makes you believe you have another hundred years to rectify the situation, then you don't call that emotion. But when a man is on a hot stove, he says "I'm coming up. I'm getting up. Violently or non-violently doesn't even enter the picture-I'm coming up, do you understand?"

-Malcolm X

# VISIONS

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,-a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. One ever feels his twoness,-an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

-WEB DuBois  
*The Souls of Black Folk*



cover photo by vin

## THE MAROON VOLUME 1 NUMBER 4

### MISSION

To re-visit the tradition of the Afrikan griot by documenting the actions, traditions, iniquities and ideologies of the 21st century Morehouse man. Though our ultimate duty is to serve our community, we refuse to relinquish our autonomy to it, nor will we acquiesce to the private agendas of individual people, organizations, or political entities. As we supply a reflective surface for Morehouse to examine her external and internal concerns, we also provide a looking glass through which the globe can analyze our pitfalls and conquests. The Maroon Tiger endeavors to maintain the highest levels of journalistic quality, moral integrity, and visual diversity in an all-inclusive journal which alienates no member of this community who embodies our ancestral spirit. In short, our goal is melanated honesty, a higher truth whose alternative is genocidal.

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# Self-Sufficiency: Beyond the Cover

by ndugu bamuthi (marc joseph, jr.)  
editor-in-chief

**T**he cynical African American is furious about the cover of this issue. He comes barging into our office, screaming at me like I'm the enemy.

"What the hell is this?"

"It's the new *Maroon*, the supplement to *The Maroon Tiger*. Have you read it?"

"Read it? I couldn't get past this bullsh-t cover!"

"Oh. The cover."

It's amazing, isn't it, how our obsession with the surface of most matters inhibits our ability to comprehend what lies underneath. Like Paul Laurence Dunbar's "mask," the surface clouds the reality of our being, consuming us with the trivial in an attempt to conceal the truth. Some of our peers couldn't get past the cover and got trapped on the surface, looking at their own reflections from the shores of the mainstream. However, for those of you who desire

ric about tearing America down, it might be wise to initiate the building process from within our own communities. In essence, call this *Maroon* a journalistic crash course in the concept of African American self-sufficiency, the precept which initially inspired us to create this supplement. The essays commentaries, and reports within reflect this theme, concentrating on the social, athletic, political, ancestral, academic, and historical phenomena which could potentially provide the empowerment that our people have long been calling for.

This is not a call for the construction of a utopia. It is a mandate for every THINKING adult within the reach of my word to consider the possibility that working to perpetuate an inherently discriminatory system could be a slap in the face to the ancestors whose shoulders we stand upon. It is a literary impetus to ponder the possibility that



photo by vin

“  
This *Maroon* is born of the spiritual wear and tear that we have all taken while we wait for OTHERS to grant us the means to prosper through legislative gifts and social reconstruction. Christmas seems to come every December and I still haven't seen African American empowerment waiting for me under the tree.  
”

African America.

This *Maroon* is born of the spiritual wear and tear that we have all taken while we wait for OTHERS to grant us the means to prosper through legislative gifts and social reconstruction. Christmas seems to come every December and I still haven't seen African American empowerment waiting for me under the tree. When my children ask me how I strengthened the race, I will not mumble and murmur how I let others control my fate. No more passivity. No more conferences and think tanks. Action. Now.

to dig a little deeper, let me preview what waits inside.

The idea behind this *Maroon* is not to incite or encourage our readers to take to the street screaming bloody murder in the name of liberation. Rather, we'd like to introduce the possibility that America has never been a particularly nurturing place for Blacks and doesn't appear to be getting radically better. Perhaps then, instead of spouting rheto-

maybe Harriet Tubman didn't keep risking her life so that a century later you could work on Wall Street, marry a white woman, and vote Republican. It is a forum to force the reader to ask what YOU have contributed to the upliftment of your people. It is a place to end the monotony of complaining about trifling Negroes, so that we might focus instead on the people, organizations, theories, and strategies for building a stronger

# The Struggle

by maleel sabir abd ur rahman  
*Special to the maroon*

*Bismillah ir Rahman ir Rahim  
(In the Name of Allah, the Most  
Beneficent, the Most Merciful)*

"The Struggle." These two words have become a generic catch-phrase among "conscious" circles and bougie "Talented Tenth" cliques. It rears its ugly head out of the mouths of "microwave Afrikans" (niggas who became self-righteous over night), the intellectual elite, and even the hardest of the rocks, the most thuggish of the ruggish. Everyone has something to say about "The Struggle." So I guess it's my turn to take a shot at defining this ambiguous term.

Now, I don't mean to generalize, but I think it's safe to say that a majority of people in the AUC, or any densely minority-populated city for that matter, would say the struggle is against "the White Man." Put your breaks on. This is only a partial truth, for the reality of the matter, at least as I have observed, is that even though the entire white race has been categorized as "devilish," there are a large number of "devils" of various sizes, shapes, and flavors. In my West End neighborhood, there is an evil entity who gets off on busting out the windows of random cars parked outside my house when folks come through on cool-out mode. This entity has stolen any and everything from tapes to textbooks to ash-tray change all in the name of coming up. It is highly unlikely that residents of Buckhead are driving to "tha 'hood" to steal three nickels and two pennies or a Melody Pharmz Crew mix tape so it seems to me that maybe some

of y'all niggas is devils too. The point of my babbling is this: there is good and bad in every one. If this has remnants of "Ebony and Ivory," please forgive me. My goal is to expand some narrow visions.

My understanding of Islam has lead me to some very revolutionary views about people, the world, myself, and most importantly, "The Struggle." Intrinsically, Islam places the root of all ethnic seeds with Adam, the first human soul created by God, divided into two halves (man and woman) "that they may find comfort in one another." And from them, Islam teaches, many different men and women were created. Regardless of where this all happened, or

Who are white folks to exert a hierarchical rulership over any people? But more importantly, who are we to surrender our reverence, our fear, our worship, our thanks, or our repentance to any created thing, let alone white folks?

what the color of the first humans was, the point ALL people seem to overlook is that we are all equals of one another in the eyes of God. I refuse to believe that a black person will go to heaven on the basis of his/her melanin even if he/she was a murderer. Likewise, I refuse to believe that another group of people are doomed to the Hell-Fire solely on the lack of their melanin.

Questions about the struggle and the adversarial relationship that fuels it still persist. Who are white folks to exert a hierarchical rulership over any people? But more importantly, who are we to surrender our reverence, our fear, our

worship, our thanks, or our repentance to any created thing, let alone the white race? Not only is it white folks we bow down to, but its our vices, as well. Our daily regiment, our idol-worship-ghetto-religions: Black and Mild, E & J, Newport, Tommy Hilfiger, Polo, Land Cruiser, Lexus, Moet, ill na-na, money, and on and on. "The Struggle" is not only against an adversary or adverse condition that we can visibly see. The Struggle is never-ending, and fundamentally internal. It is about getting that little Shatan, that little "devil" inside all of us, to bow down to his Creator.

Jihad, is an Arabic word meaning "struggle in the cause of Allah." There are three main ways to fight Jihad; 1. within the heart; 2. with the tongue; and 3. with the hand. Any time we speak out against injustice or evil, we wage Jihad. Any time we fight those who oppress the

downtrodden, we wage Jihad. Let us wage Jihad in our hearts. The real struggle isn't against any group of people, it is with our collective selves. Let's be soldiers in the cause of our Creator. Do you have the heart to be in THAT struggle?

---

*Writer's Note: If I have said anything correct, it is by Allah's mercy that I have done so, and if I have said anything wrong, it is by the error of my own hand.*

# Psychological Challenges Facing Self-Sufficiency

cedi alexander snowden  
editorial pages editor

There's an upsetting fact about the question of Black self-sufficiency; even if there weren't outside forces keeping us from it, we still wouldn't rise to it. Our own minds would hold us back. Right now, in 1997, we could easily be that proverbial stubborn horse that's been led to the drinking hole. The only difference is that not only are we unwilling to drink, we're not being lead to the water either. Society likes us just as we are: dependent.

Dependency is a central part of our upbringing, and we've swallowed it hook, line, and sinker. It's an interesting quality we seem to have, this knack for internalizing value systems foreign to our nature. But the most curious thing happens after they're sitting in our bellies. We not only accept the foreign values we're immersed in, we cling to them religiously. Take sexism, for example. Women are looked at as objects first, people later...maybe. That's the way America works. But Afrikan peoples revere womanhood, and the mother is upheld above all else. So even though we've been brought up to be sexist, there **SHOULD** be a little part of us that can never really buy into it, right? Hmmm.

Not only are we sexist, we're even more sexist than the architects of the system. B\*tches, hoes, tricks, broads, skirts—all these are commonly associated with Black womanhood. White society, the indoctrinating culture, doesn't do that. It disrespects its women too, sure, but does it look at a pimp as the truest embodiment of a man? Does it idolize someone who plays destructive games with a woman's mind, self-image, and sexuality for his own satisfaction and personal gain? And yet how many of us, even here at the supposed Mecca of Black Manhood, are walking

around bragging that we're pimps?

Hatred of ourselves is another value we've taken to quite nicely. America teaches its citizens that Black folk are to be scorned, mistrusted, feared, even weeded out. Since we're citizens, at



photo by vin

least in name, we get that lesson too. But one would think that we Black folk would be a little hesitant about believing that one—Lord only knows why—but instead we sit in the front of the class and nod enthusiastically. Afterwards we go about the direct business of doing away with Black folk ourselves. Sure, a brother gets lynched in modern day terms virtually every day, but how many more brothers kill other brothers

every single day of the year?

Obviously, both sexism and self-hatred are hurdles blocking our path to self-sufficiency. Plainly speaking, we need to trust each other before we can depend on each other. But we also need the capital to work with, which is why materialism is perhaps the most debilitating value that we've internalized and cultivated. It's a concept that's naturally bred and nourished in a capitalistic society; the society needs a market for its goods. America is materialistic, so it's not surprising that we are too. But again, we've gone one better than the rest of America. We are materialism's most fanatical followers. Image, status, and the appearance of affluence are of supreme importance to us. We spend an ungodly amount of money on fashions we know we won't be caught dead in a year later. We have families where teenage children wear Air Jordan shoes and Versace shirts, but live in shabby houses. We have women who measure a brother by what kind of car he drives. We have men who frown on sisters who don't keep their hair newly permed, nails freshly done, and clothes new and stylish. We break our backs trying to look like we have money, when in reality Discover, Visa, and MasterCard own most of our stuff. How in God's name are we going to invest in our-

selves and our community if getting that phat Polo outfit is more important? Or those fly diamond studs? Or that Benz?

Until we recognize the chains that we've helped tie ourselves down with, self-sufficiency will remain an abstract, "wouldn't it be great if" idea. We have to realize that **WE** are our greatest obstacle. Once we get moving, we can't be stopped. But we have to get moving.



# Afrikan Rites of Passage in America

by gregory l. johnson, jr.  
a & e co-editor



*The Council of Elders of the Ndugu and Nzinga Rites of Passage organizations.*

photo by vin

**A**t the tree behind Clark Atlanta University's Haven-Warren Hall, students, graduates, and faculty from all over the Atlanta University Center gather around a youthful man

clad in a baseball cap and a colorful dashiki. He is Clark Atlanta University's Associate Professor of English and African-American Studies, Daniel Black. Also known as "Baba," a Nigerian term of endearment loosely translated as "father" or "mentor," Black has earned the title as the head of the Ndugu and Nzinga rites of passage programs.

Dr. Black was inspired to begin Ndugu by his graduate research in Temple University's African-American Studies program. He began Nzinga for women one year later. In most African communities, rites of passage were mandatory, he discovered. He determined a similar process was needed to teach young African-Americans the importance of community over individualism. Five years later, students from all over and even outside of the AUC have participated in Ndugu and Nzinga.

Dr. Black asserts that many students base their sense of self and identity on "individual achievement in Western society." In Ndugu and Nzinga, initiates join "Baba" and a council of elders on a one-year journey where they are taught to base their identity upon the collective. Ndugu and Nzinga members learn forgiveness, humility, nurturing, wisdom, and spirituality through East and West African-based rituals rumored to include fasting from speech, a simulation of the enslaved African's passage over the Atlantic, being given symbolic names, and for men, a sacrificial shaving of one's locks.

In Ndugu and Nzinga, Dr. Black teaches these principles in an effort to transcend perceived differences of gender, religion, region and ideology among African-Americans. He asserts, "I think racial oppression tends to make these differences appear very small. Ultimately, what people see as differences only exist and get power because of the context of where we are."

Regarding perceived differences, sexism is not tolerated in the rites of passage. Ndugu brothers such as Azikiwe and Seitu Nzuriwatu were instrumen-

tal in founding the organization Black Men for the Eradication of Sexism. Dr. Black says, "most of the brothers who come to Ndugu tend to be those who have struggled with sexism- we don't have to deal with it as much as we did when we first began the journey." Dr. Black recognizes what African-American women offer to the spiritual growth of African-American communities, namely, "a history of perseverance, a commitment to family which women as a whole have sustained," he says, adding, "which, I think, we as men have struggled with."

Although his rites of passage promote self-analysis and self-development on a societal level, it requires earnest desire. Dr. Black points out, "It doesn't make sense to give that energy to someone who doesn't want it. My God! Give it to someone who does!" However, to students looking to make a positive change within themselves, "Baba" is reassuring. "All you gotta do is want it," he says. Even if you don't know how to start, I'm with you."

# What if ...

by marc joseph  
editor-in-chief

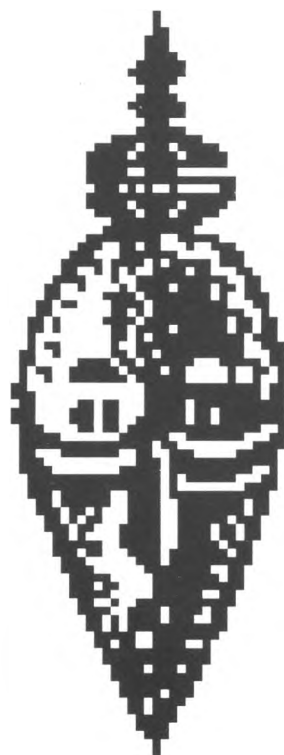
photo by azikiwe nzuriwatu



What if your actions were as "spiritual" as your hair? What if Dean Dease ever smiled? What if I could get out from under this mountain of homework? What if you saw things more clearly with your eyes closed? What if Praz, Doodlebug, and Dinco D formed a group called the "Fast Forward Through My Part MC's"? What if the physical shackles felt like rubber bracelets compared to the mental ones? What if the AUC schools would pull together instead of going their separate ways? What if 85% of all house parties weren't broken up by the police? What if McDonald's wasn't the official sponsor of Black History Month? What if folks realized that friendship is a 24/7/365 type of responsibility? What if the "Loft Sessions" wasn't the phattest concept for a

**atlanta loft sessions #2**  
12<sup>15</sup> - 8<sup>15</sup>  
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party in Atlanta? What if you didn't have to dip into your wallet to show her how much you loved her? What if they were REAL REAL fly. until they opened their mouth? What if folks would STOP asking me what I'm doing after graduation? What if you could accept that it wasn't meant to be and just let go? What if my morals were as tight as my questions suggest they are? What if Adriana Evans is the flyest recording artist no one's ever heard of? What if this wasn't a question but just an excuse to give a shout out to my favorite woman on earth: hi mom.



# Moving Like Malcolm



photo courtesy michael ochs archives

I think of Malcolm I always look at something entirely different.

Malcolm was like many of us, young, gifted, black, broke, and trapped within a system that would enjoy nothing more than his people's total extermination. He went from being just another bama pawn on 125th street to a major player in the game. But then he went to jail and learned how unbalanced the rules are in that game. He realized that he couldn't win by playing by their rules and so he flushed away everything he knew for a chance at being re-born. He re-taught himself to read and

write, re-taught himself to think and reason and made a choice to try and uplift the race through his initial weapon of choice, The Nation of Islam.

This is the Malcolm we should keep in mind when we talk about self-sufficiency. We can no longer drown in the mainstream in hopes that by adding ourselves to the pool things will get better. If our kids aren't getting proper education in the public systems then there are private and afrocentric ones that can alleviate that problem. If the Asian/Arabic/Racist store owner keeps jacking up the prices at the corner store then we should know to walk another ten blocks to the spot that respects us as consumers and might be owned by a brother or sister. If we don't trust the television

cameras that ravage our neighborhoods in search of their truth, then we should focus our attention and support on the Black press that will. We need to farm in our backyards. We need to pray without pondering why sister so and so had on an ugly hat at early service last Sunday. We need to abandon tradition if it no longer serves us and most importantly, we need to stop sleeping on the Beast at the borders of our neighborhoods, patiently waiting to devour any one that wants to make it out and make change.

Before he was a leader Malcolm was

*This is the Malcolm we  
should keep in mind  
when we talk about  
self-sufficiency.*

a follower. Before he was a follower he educated himself as to what he should follow. No matter what he did Malcolm always tried to make sure that he had as much control over his life and family as he possibly could. That's a lesson that doesn't usually occur to us when we think of the man whose image we silkscreen onto every other t-shirt and sweatshirt. This is the lesson that will make our uprising that more cunning and organized. It has to start with each of us just as Malcolm started with reading in the dim light of a prison cell block passageway.

As we approach a new millennium, we as the Black generation X find ourselves aimlessly milling around in search of direction. As we've grown up we've been given two basic archetypes from which we can draw the position we must take in the struggle: Martin and Malcolm. This is about Malcolm.

Malcolm X has meant many different things to us. He has been a symbol of violent protest and martyrdom, a critical thinker and organizational strategist, a loose canon that could only be neutralized by its own destruction. We see the man with the glasses and red hair peering out of the window of his home armed with a machine gun, waiting to defend his family and property against any attack. We see Harlem. We see Mecca. We see why he posed such a threat to the oppressively grinding gears of the American machine. But whenever



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# Representing Our Athletes: Blacks Must Be Agents of Change

by kyle j. martin  
sports editor

I

t's been said too many times that if you don't want black folk to know something, you'd better put it in print. That's why it's funny that

with regards to black athletes being represented by black agents, the writing on the wall has been so blatantly clear and so brutally honest. For the black sports agent, the attempt to represent black athletes has become an agon of ridiculously frustrating pro-

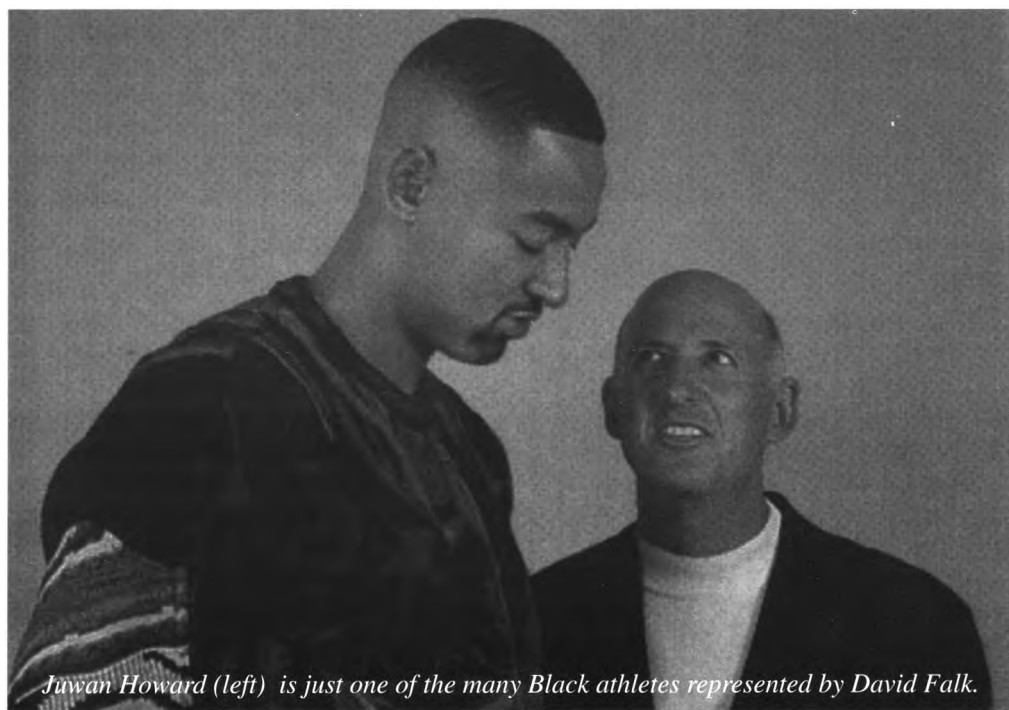
reports, Black athletes make up 82 percent of the players in the NBA, 68 percent of those in the NFL, and 19 percent of the total in Major League Baseball, there should be, statistically speaking, a viable pool of clients for black agents to represent. But is there? Not really, when one takes a closer look at the situation. Not when big-name white attorneys like David Falk go out and coral marquee names like Jordan, Ewing, Iverson, Mourning, and Juwan Howard for their ever-expanding stable of black athletes and then simply use the clout of these superstar clients to maintain a stranglehold on much of the NBA's incoming talent.

money, a sickness that is only serving to further erode our already tenuous progress in the black community towards self-sufficiency and eventual self-empowerment. This tendency is painfully evident in sports, as the black athlete has somehow bought into the notion that choosing a white agent is the way to go if you want to "get yours." *I'ma go with a Falk, or a Steinberg, or some other bigwig white agent, then kick back and watch those teams "show me 'da money."*

We love talking about bucking the system, but why haven't we given our own agents a chance to help us do this? Considering all the yang that Georgetown's Men's Basketball coach John Thompson talks in challenging conventions when he speaks out against the NCAA's racism towards black coaches and black student-athletes, why is it that he has David Falk as his attorney? Or Tiger Woods, who, though he breaks his black heritage down to only a small percentage, was black enough to know to go with white Superagent Hughes Norton when he hit the pro ranks this past summer?

**H**ey, fellas, black agents have got skillz" too — after all it was the brother duo of Carl and Kevin Poston who got the Orlando Magic's Anfernee Hardaway that fat (Pre-Rookie Salary Cap) contract for 13 years at \$68 million. And what about Atlanta-based attorney R. David Ware, who was key in getting Detroit Lions running back Barry Sanders the highest non-quarterback contract in the NFL in 1989? Black athletes need to follow through with their complaints against the system and follow in the footsteps of the Washington Bullets' Chris Webber and multi-sport athlete Deion Sanders by committing themselves to being represented by a black agent.

It's about time we get our black agents into the game by making them a big part of an offense designed to score big points against a hostile mainstream opposition. This may be our only shot in changing the momentum of the Representation Game, a contest in which our athletes truly have a chance to be "Da Man" by providing some much-needed assists worth two points: One for our black agents and one for our community.



*Juwan Howard (left) is just one of the many Black athletes represented by David Falk.*

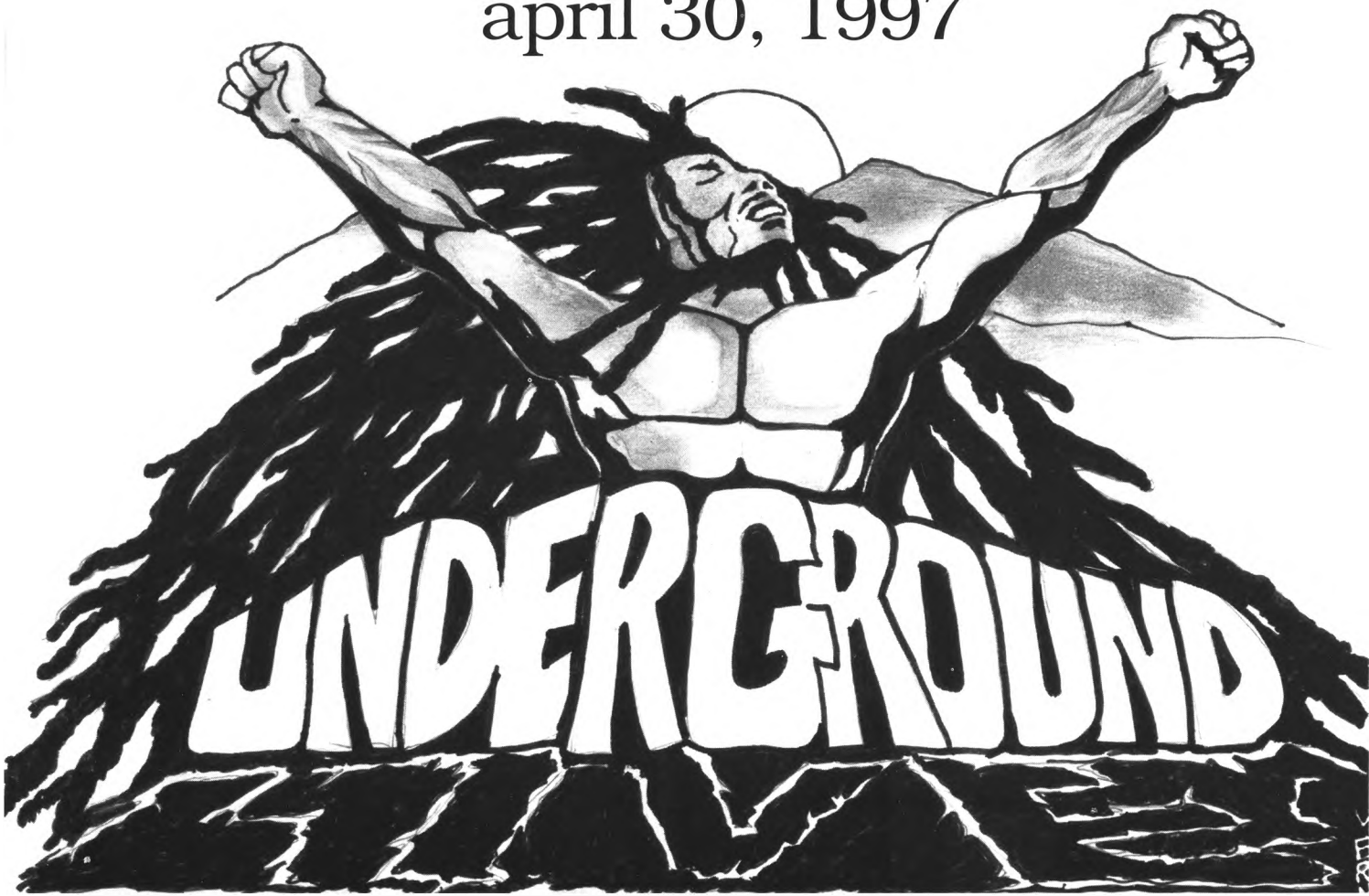
portions. Within the covertly racist, exploitive entity that is professional athletics, the prognosis for black sports agents has just gotten worse: Their greatest ally, their supposed ace-in-the-hole, the black athlete, is really a double agent who denounces "The System" on one end, then goes out and does his fair share in perpetuating it on the other.

If, as the Center for the Study of Sport in Society at Northeastern University

And don't forget the now-famous Leigh Steinberg, who, in addition to serving as the agent-model for the box office blockbuster *Jerry Maguire*, will undoubtedly have the NFL covered as he reaps the benefits of having Super Bowl XXXI MVP Desmond Howard as a client.

So what gives here? Obviously not our athletes, but WHY? For a plethora of reasons, but mainly because in general we as black folk don't trust each other — especially when it comes to handling our

april 30, 1997



## THE MAROON

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# Youth Task Force Fights for Self-Determination

chester starks, jr. (ndugu kayode)  
campus news co-editor

While the numbers of people who talk about change increase with every barber shop conversation, some individuals have taken it upon themselves to organize in the name of action. The Youth Task Force (YTF) is one such organizing entity that promotes intra-communal reliance while educating all those who will listen about the written and unwritten laws which continue to threaten the Black community.

The YTF consists of a group of young Afrikan sisters and brothers who organize an abundance of programs that promote self sufficiency in our communities. Olly Taal, a student at Georgia State University and Program Director for the YTF, says that "It's time for young people to learn how to sew... [how to] farm, how to cook, how to do things that are necessary for our survival." The

YTF publishes a newsletter called the Fourth Quarterly Report, produces a television show on Channel 12, is planning a radio show, and constructed hip hop forums that last year attracted "over 500 people."

Kevin Ladaris, Development Director for the YTF and a Morehouse student, wants the community to have as much help as it can get. "I heavily encourage brothers and sisters to get in more community work," he



Khari Shiver/Staff

**Tanisa, Olli, Angela, and Kevin: Up to the Task**

**Why would these men and women take on this role, when the majority of their peers have chosen complacency or rhetoric as their means of dealing with the social (dis) order in this nation? What keeps them motivated?**

**"The fact that we aren't free,"  
answers Angela Brown.**

YTF provides ways to start teaching these things to the youth. As one of several projects designed to achieve this skill-teaching goal is a YTF international project that will take serious youth from the U.S. to African countries such as The Gambia, Senegal, Mali, and Ghana, so that they can see how their Afrikan elders start farms, make jewelry, and become entrepreneurs and do the same thing in their own communities.

The YTF tackles much more than ways to increase our ability to nurture ourselves, it also battles those entities which have adversely contributed to the demise of our communities, such as the false stereotypes which portray our communities in a negative fashion. "Since we don't control the media here [in America], we have such a distorted view of ourselves," Taal explains. To combat the negativity in the media, the

stresses. Ladaris is one of the first members of the Black Men for the Eradication of Sexism (BMES), and he also is an ardent supporter of Project POW MIA. Both entities sit under the YTF umbrella. While BMES tackles all forms of sexism, Project POW MIA educates the community about the criminal justice system, and also supports incarcerated brothers and sisters, especially ones who participate in the Black liberation struggle.

Tanisa Foxworth, College Outreach Director, also mentions a new campus newsletter that will highlight college activities that promote self-sufficiency. She explains that the College Outreach division of the YTF has training programs that help college students become political and social activists. "The Youth Task Force hopes that [the training] will produce activists who will be

committed to fighting for justice, first on their college campus and ultimately in their communities," she said. The training categories are fundraising, edutainment, political education, outreach, organizational development, media, and computer education.

Why would these men and women take on this role, when the majority of their peers have chosen complacency or rhetoric as their means of dealing with the social (dis) order in this nation? What keeps them motivated? "The fact that we aren't free," answers Angela Brown, who is the Executive Director. "Basically, we can't have a future unless we're self-sufficient," adds Taal. It is this sentiment that has the Youth Task Force in the midst of a struggle to enlighten and incorporate their brothers and sisters through education and community activism. Foxworth suggests that interested people are welcome to contact their organization, perhaps even getting involved in the organization of a college outreach conference that will happen in July. The program is for the participating HBCUs to network and share ideas and activities that each college has concerning college activism. Interested persons can call Tanisa at 404-752-TASK for more info.

# The Fulfilled Promise of the H.B.C.U

by spencer gould  
special to the maroon

photos by vin



The disparity between HBCU's and the young men and women they purport to instruct begins in the ante-bellum South in the days immediately following the "Emancipation." People of color had been deprived of the privilege of

its. Enter, the philanthropists and the mysteriously uncharacteristic selflessness that prompted them to invest in educating, excuse me, *mis*-educating Black folk. Here you have people who have mastered the art of mass exploita-

mindstate. For without a work force, the archetypical proletariat, how could they possibly afford to maintain their lavish lifestyles? Consequently, we claw, steal, cheat, and lie for a **JOB** on Wall Street, while the folk who **OWN** Wall Street come into our communities and clean up. Brown as they may be, our Ebony League schools are more Euro-centrally influenced than any of our administrators would ever care to admit.

Therefore, I say that for its intents and purposes, the H.B.C.U. has done a stellar job of adhering to its mission of turning out shiny brown pennies, "yes" men, brown nosers, and educated fools who are ripe for the exploiting. Think about it. \$15,000 x 4 years = a \$60,000 license to serve. . . someone else. It seems to me



education for so long that they pounced on the first opportunity they received to attain one. The problem was that they never stopped to think whether or not being educated by Americans of European descent was, indeed, in their best interest. Living in a capitalist society, we must examine how one can rise to prominence. After a brief stint of working at Eddie Bauer, I understand well the concept that there can be no profit unless the worker is exploited. The better one masters the art of mass exploitation, the higher the prof-

tion giving money to people who has been mis-educate a massively exploited since their arrival on this continent. Getting clearer?

Americans of European descent were (are) so blindly psychotic in their pursuit of capitalist gain that they have contrived an

educational system that is detrimental even to their own kind. Education is funded by powers that want the masses to remain in a perpetual "employee"

that we have some power, through tuition fees, alumni donations, and Black church and business alliances, to affect change. Even on the undergraduate level, those of us whom Dr. Mays described as "Born to Rebel" can fight to revolutionize the moral foundation of our education. One student changed the face of Chinese politics by taking a stand in Tienmen Square. Imagine what several thousand could accomplish if we chose to change the intent and execution of our education.



**Spelman  
College**

# Cultural- Expression: Empowerment or Vanity?

vernando reuben  
features co-editor

photos by marlo herring



Be like: "shaughty red," or better yet, "my Nubian queen," whatever you feel; and "nigg\* please," they'll say. Why? Cause it's the A.U.C. And without the slightest doubt,

sistah's KNOW they're fly. See, for some of us, spending no less than two hours each morning restylin' the do that just got "did," and accessorizing with meticulous care and arduous precision is nothing for the high price of high ghetto-glamour. Last season, sistas rocked the patenteleava go-go boots and the black sar'day night feva pants, clad with attitude and bathed in Polo Sport cologne. This spring on the Brawley promenade catwalk they're doing leopard skins, one-side shoulder-strapped tops, the Jackie-O/Foxy Brown sun hat. And for those of us who sport kinks and locks in appreciation of our "roots," --who by planting seeds of liberation with every psycho-spiritual affirmation of "Ase!," --the dashiki or gele will suit just fine.

The point to all this? Fashion in the A.U.C., is not merely a self-imploding show of socio-economic pretense. Not all visions are clouded by R&B/commercial rap-renditions of Blaxploitation flicks. And not all of us are willing to pay the buck and/or the f-ck necessary for the image heavily promoted by Biggie and provided by Calvin Klein, Donna Karan, Armani, Versace, Dolce and Gabbana, Nautica, Polo, Nike, &

Tommy, (*wheew!*) They get tossed with all the other popular name-brands branded on the psyches of young, black, animated mannequins with questionable intellects, IDs, and credit accounts. Actually, it is what we've always been—a passionately creative, colorful, and spiritual people. Fashion is merely an attribute, just one dimension of our cultural dynamic. Like our language and voice, music and dance, rhythm and soul, fashion is a speed-limitless vehicle of expression, violating the expanse of the mainstream mindset with constant change. Fashion does more than differentiate or individualize, especially considering the fact that the African American style has been captured and capitalized with pop culture craze. As a means of cultural expression, fashion defines psycho-spiritual as well as socio-economic liberation. It aligns how we feel about ourselves as a dominant multi-cultural entity throughout the globe.

The aesthetic precedent set with the afro and dashiki for Black Americans in the 70's means as much today. It suggests Af-



rican America's definitive power and freedom to change and influence, if only herself. From Churchgoing Black folk to

corporate-heads and entrepreneurs, Black Americans now feel less inhibited

in expressing their African roots, even if it is only surface. African American youth have however made the most obvious changes. We've taken preppy /

conservative dress (i.e. Ralph Lauren Polo) out of suburbia and altered it to fit the contemporary needs of the urban ghetto. Conversely, we've moved concrete jungles to quiet little suburban utopias by way of camouflage and gortex boots. Moreover, Black people have taken Eurocentric hairstyles, and accentuated them with height, dimension and color, and paraded what we've decided was "tight ta deaf" (that's Atlanta slang for impressive). Braids aren't quite so "unprofessional." Dreadlocks are no longer signature of just rudeboys, rastas, and drug dealers.

In essence African Americans in this country are liberated if only through their everchanging avenues of cultural expression. So maybe the two hours spent in the mirror everyday isn't so fickle. Perhaps those sistas out there with 3-feet high helmet-like hairstyles and gold-fronts wearing broths actually have something Carlton-the-thirds don't—an identity—one reflective of transformation and re-creation. With the consistency of change, African decedents have denied delusions of aesthetic inferiority, and continue to design and erect their own standards and institutions of beauty and style.





# A Union of Equals

by ijeoma isoke  
special to *the maroon*

On Friday, March 21, 1997, I attended the Crown Forum in honor of the 53rd Annual Family Institute at Morehouse College. The keynote address was given by Ron Johnson, the Executive Director for the National Family Life and Education Center in California. As I prepared to hear him speak on a definition of Black manhood in a room full of Black men at a historically Black college for, though not by, Black men, I wondered exactly when the cycle of "isms" in our community would cease. You see I no longer question whether or not this will occur, my only question is when...

As the program began, I found myself waiting to hear what Mr. Johnson had to say off the C-Span camera in this audience of black men at a historically Black college for, though not by, Black men. A definition of manhood—Black manhood—given by a Black man, must be something that sisters can benefit from as well. After all we are in this together—struggling for the same freedom, right?...

Well the speech began interestingly enough, directed at the brothers, not to exclude the sisters of course. This in itself was not a problem because he was in a room full of Black men at a historically Black college for, though not by, Black men. I figured there would come a point when issues specific to women must be addressed. Oh well, it's brother Johnson's call, I thought, and he's speaking to the brothers specifically. . . Use some humility Ijeoma and don't ques-

tion every thing. This is what I told myself as I listened to myself and him as the speech continued. . .

"Brothers," he went on, "you must understand your role as that of a good farmer when you think of your relationships. Now a good farmer wouldn't want land that's been walked over by other men, would he? That farmer would cultivate that land. . . place a fence around it, and a place a "no trespassing" sign on it. . . Right-Black men?"

And I became less my Self and more



an inanimate object to be toiled and cultivated and "WRONG!" is what my Self cried out to me. . . As his words resounded louder and louder my heart pounded with anger and hurt from the fallacy before me. I could not understand why a room full of Black men at a historically Black College for, though not by, Black men, could not understand that this was the objectification of other human beings. . . What if a white man used the same analogy to describe the selection of a good male nigger for work purposes? *You must treat him just like a good work horse. You feed him, water him, build a fence around him, and don't allow others to work him.* . . Would the offensive nature of this comment become evident at this point, or are we content with the oppression of ourselves, by ourselves?

As I and my sister left that auditorium of Black men at that historically Black college for, though not by, Black men, I wondered what was Black manhood, and why the black population, and not the value system of a school, made it historically Black. I wondered when we would collectively understand that the objectification of each other is not acceptable even when it is "just an analogy." I wondered when we would understand that those who work in the community and influence our children must be held to a higher level of expectation and correction. I tried to calculate in my head how many times in the next week I would have to explain myself to brothers who didn't really want to know why I left, and sisters who just didn't feel the same. I wondered how many brothers, including the speaker, would have thought twice about the statement had we not walked out. . . how many would understand that it was a political move to cause such questioning, and

not just an emotional one based on feeling like the naked nigger in the crowd—a "strip of land" to be cultivated.

And now I wonder how many brothers will read this in understanding and humility. How many sisters will understand Mr. Johnson's comments as a statement of disrespect to all of us, and not a certain type of woman? How many will recognize these issues as strikes against humanity rather than ammunition for feminist rhetoric. . . I ask is freedom our goal, or the shift of perpetuated power our aim? Will we remain silent against those forms of oppression, abuse and misuse that are uncomfortable for family members to address for another century? Must the revolutionaries-in-training apply for unapproved leaves of absence now? If it's do or die, who will make the call?

You decide. . .

# PLAN OF ACTION

## 6 STEPS TO REACHING A SELF-SUFFICIENT PLATEAU

**Buy Land**-We've been sucked into the trap of believing that land ownership is only pertinent to those who would build mini-malls or skyscrapers. This is an ideological fallacy. Once the land is bought, it is yours to develop as you please, and not necessarily right away. Do some investigating and learn how the AUC schools have bought land and held it as an ace in the hole until the right situations arose.

**Education**-If you took Western based philosophy, economics, history and language out of our current collective curriculum, the entire educational process would consist of about 3 weeks of lessons. If something OTHER than an Afrocentric culture has comprised 16 years of your knowledge base, than it is your responsibility to supplement what you've been given. In essence develop a deeper sense of self. By extension, do not engage in such a deep level of ignorance of current events and theory that you are blind to the laws, systems, and sanctions which if enforced, could ensure the demise of our community.

**Support Black Businesses**-How do you manage to spend every weekend at Lenox without EVER having gone down to Auburn Avenue? How many times have you skipped a Jomandi production so you could watch a Stallone flick in Buckhead? Although very important, barber shops and eateries only make up a portion of black businesses. Commit yourself to patronizing Black dentists, doctors, bookstores, record shops, grocery stores, etc. It used to take the black dollar a whole year to leave the community. Now black dollars leave the neighborhood every five minutes.

**Skilled Labor**-In this new technical age, the de-emphasis of skilled labor has rendered our communities unable to fulfill some of their own basic needs. It is impressive to know how to surf the net and be able to read several different computer languages, but it is of greater fundamental importance to know how to grow your own food. If for some reason everything around us was destroyed who would be skilled enough to construct a building, make a generator, grow food, or even make clothes. We can no longer afford to take these necessities for granted. Without having these skills in our community, we are left to the mercy of those who may not have our best interest in mind

**Mentorship**-One of the most interesting facets of John Singleton's *Rosewood* is his depiction of how the town's whites understood racism to be a cultural heirloom. Only a fool would assume that this portrayal of the perpetuation of racism was just a part of Singleton's artistic vision. We must be as adamant about extending our positive elements to our children as other groups are about making sure that characteristically destructive traits get passed down from generation to generation. The children shall lead the way but the elders must give them direction. Grassroots change literally means building a new paradigm of values. Instilling principles in our children, rather than leaving them to the streets, increases the possibility of morality replacing destruction as THE institution pervading our community.

**Construct and Cultivate a Spiritual Base**-Though we communicate and understand our relationships with our deities in different ways, most of us agree that fundamentally, a higher power must exist to whom we owe all honor, praise, and thanks. It makes no logical sense to worship the almighty or observe the Sabbath, and then exclude the Creator from our lives the rest of the week. Seeking strength through the power of prayer is the most viable means of upliftment. Only a non-believer will tell you different.

# Lift Every Voice and Sing

*Lyrics by James Weldon Johnson*

Lift every voice and sing  
Till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the list'ning skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us;  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun  
Let us march on, till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,  
Bitter the chast'ning rod,  
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;  
Yet with a steady beat,  
Have not our weary feet,  
Come to the place for which our parents sighed?  
We have come over a way that with  
Tears has been watered,  
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,  
Out from the gloomy past, Till now we found at last  
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way,  
Thou who has by Thy might  
Led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the places,  
Our God, where we met Thee,  
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;  
Shadowed beneath Thy Hand,  
May we forever stand,.  
True of our GOD,  
True to our native land.